

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01452

E.O. 11652: GD XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, XG
SUBJECT: EUROPEAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF RFE/RL
REFERENCE: BONN 17592

1. IN FOREIGN OFFICE CALL, WE DISCUSSED EUROPEAN FUNDING RFE/RL WITH IRD'S BARKER, DRAWING ON BRAINARD VISIT AND LETTER TO MAKE THIS FURTHER APPROACH.
2. JANUARY'S GENERAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL GLOOM PERVaded CONVERSATION. BARKER SAID THERE IS NO HOPE FOR CONCERTED EUROPEAN APPROACH, AND REPEATED EARLIER FCO ASSERTION THAT ONLY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO STATIONS IS THROUGH DEVICE OF SUBSCRIPTION TO RESEARCH SERVICES.
3. BARKER SAID FCO HAD, IN RESPONSE TO OUR EARLIER SUGGESTIONS, THOROUGHLY EXPLORED POSSIBILITIES OF PRIVATE FUND RAISING WITH APPROPRIATE PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS, AND HAD COME UP WITH NOTHING EVEN FAINTLY ENCOURAGING. THIS IS IN LINE WITH OUR OWN SOUNDINGS: GREAT CONCERN FOR STATIONS' CONTINUATION BUT NO MONEY FOR SUPPORT.
4. BARKER SAID SUPPORT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, AND DECISION HAS NOW BEEN MADE TO BUY RFE/RL RESEARCH PRODUCTS "TO BE USED WITHIN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE," WITH 5,000 POUNDS SET ASIDE FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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BARKER FEELS THIS SUM, THOUGH MODEST, IS A MANIFESTATION OF REAL INTEREST, AND CAN BE SPUR TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS,

INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE.

5. AT A PARTICULARLY BLEAK MOMENT, WHEN FCO IS FIGHTING TO PRESERVE ADEQUATE FUNDING OF BBC RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGE SERVICES, EVEN THIS SMALL BEGINNING IS MORE THAN TOKEN GESTURE TOWARD RFE/RL. BRITISH CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH RESEARCH SUBSCRIPTIONS CAN GROW, BUT WE BELIEVE WE CANNOT REALISTICALLY EXPECT SUPPORT MONEY IN SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS THIS YEAR.

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